



*Leading environmental  
protection in West Michigan  
by inspiring action!*

May 15, 2012

Senate Energy and Technology Committee  
Re: HB 4265/HB 4266

Dear Chairman Nofs and Members of the Committee:

The West Michigan Environmental Council (WMEAC) **opposes** HB 4265 and HB 4266. We are concerned with HB 4265 and HB 4266 because of their negative impact on Michigan small businesses (such as composters and organic recycler's), inefficient use of organic materials, and unnecessary utilization of landfill space.

**Major Concerns**

1. Many compost business owners feel that the diversion of organic material to landfills will significantly hurt their businesses. Additionally, the Institute for local self-reliance found that composting creates four jobs to every one job that is created by landfilling or incineration. With only a minimal increase in energy production (an estimated 60MW), and a struggling state economy, the economic benefits of a small increase in power generation are over showered by the costs.
2. In 2011 an estimated yearly 1.4 million cubic yards of yard clippings were composted at registered composting facilities. Allowing a portion of this to be sent to landfills will increase the need for additional landfill capacity.
3. Decreasing the amount of material sent to composting businesses will limit the amount compost that can be purchased by Michigan's urban and rural agricultural industry; compelling Michigan's agricultural sector to rely more heavily on chemical nutrients and fertilizers, which pollute our water systems.
4. Although naturally occurring decomposition of organic materials contributes to the flow of CO<sub>2</sub> between vegetation and the atmosphere, the practice of anaerobic decomposition in landfills releases Methane, which is a 23 times more potent greenhouse gas than CO<sub>2</sub>. The standard of efficiency for landfill Methane capture is 70%, allowing the remaining 30% to be released un-captured into the atmosphere.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "N. Occhipinti".

Nicholas Occhipinti,  
WMEAC Policy Director